Indiana GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION COUNCIL
140 N. Senate Ave, Room 306
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Coordination of Indiana GIS through dissemination of data and data products, education and outreach, adoption of standards, building partnerships and the IndianaMap.

METADATA MADE EASY

Challenge

Metadata is important documentation about your GIS data. It is the "what, where, when, who and why" that helps you retain your GIS investment when the people who know come and go. Although creating metadata is a critical task, it can be tedious and time-consuming. Eliminating the reasons for procrastinating - "I don't know how to write metadata," "It takes way too much time," "What in the world does 'spatial extent' mean?" - can go a long way toward ensuring that metadata is created.

Action

The Northwest Indiana GIS Forum produced an online Metadata Tool that makes metadata creation as easy and painless as possible http://igs.indiana.edu/metadata. Working with the Indiana Geological Survey, the Forum developed a user-friendly web-based interface. The tool ultimately produces an FGDC minimally-compliant metadata record in text file format that can be saved to the user's local computer. The text file can also be uploaded to the IndianaMap Data Library or imported into ESRI ArcCatalog software without further processing.

In addition to the tool, the website offers numerous metadata-related resources, including detailed printable instructions, great explanations of metadata and metadata collection, and the FGDC's *Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata Workbook.*

The Forum has created a relatively painless option for metadata creation

Results

The Metadata Tool encourages GIS professionals to generate metadata by eliminating many of the stumbling blocks. Agencies and organizations who may not have been creating metadata in the past now have a quick and efficient alternative. And metadata benefits everyone. Users of the data can determine if it really is what they need. Metadata in compliance with FGDC standards can be easily searched within state or national data clearinghouses. The collection of metadata also preserves institutional memory and helps organizations avoid the costs of duplicating data that has already been compiled.